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AUTHOR Richardson, Joan; Rossman, Neil
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ABSTRACT

During their first quarter, all nonremedial liberal arts students at LaGuardia Community College take an introductory cluster of four courses. These "freedom clusters" use a single body of material and a common analytical method and have, as their fixed elements, courses in philosophy, English composition, and the research paper. Course goals are to promote the transition from "passive" to "active" knowledge and an understanding that human freedom is a "process of becoming" over which personal responsibility must be taken. During their first stage, the courses involve students in questioning the way they order and define the world, by stripping words to their basic meanings and examining received beliefs. Next, different theories of human nature are explored through an examination of literary and philosophical works by Hobbes, Koestler, and Dewey. Then the question of freedom is studied with the goal of replacing a passive, externalized conception of human freedom with a view based on human activity and individual responsibility. The study of works by Sartre and Camus is linked with assignments and exercises to help students view freedom in terms of an individual's social, historical, and personal context and in terms of external and internal constraints. Students are led from a focus on "freedom from..." to "freedom to..." and eventually to consideration of the question of their own freedom. (This paper explains the sequence in which topics are presented and the instructional methods and materials used to accomplish course goals.) (HB)

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Thought, Language and Freedom: An Integrated Approach to Teaching Basic Humanities Courses

by

Joan Richardson

and

Neil Rossman

F.H. LaGuardia Community College

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During their first quarter as non-remedial matriculants, all Liberal Arts students at LaGuardia take an Introductory Cluster. The Clusters we teach, the "Freedom Clusters," are made up of four courses, three of which are constant each term. The fixed components are: Introduction to Philosophy, Basic Composition, and The Research Paper. The fourth course varies from Cluster to Cluster. The Cluster Freedom and Communication has Oral Communication as its fourth component; Freedom and Seeing has Introduction to the Understanding of Art; and Freedom: Thinking and Imagining has Mathematics and the Modern World.

We see the Philosophy and English sections as the fixed elements in the Cluster because the thinking process presupposes and involves using words clearly and the writing process presupposes and involves clear thinking. This reciprocity is mirrored in the original connection between logos and "logic" and is made clear as the two courses develop and mutually reinforce the skills needed to perceive reality adequately.

Typically, groups of courses are simply put together around a common theme, time period, or both: for example, "war," "the seventeenth century," or the "Romantic Rebellion." This kind of grouping could be called "multi-disciplinary." As opposed to this, our approach is truly inter-disciplinary. Generally, in a multi-disciplinary grouping, there are three or four distinct bodies of material, each with methods appropriate to the disciplines involved. In contrast, our linking of Philosophy and English uses one body of material and a common analytical method, modified according to the surface differences between thinking and using language. In this way, we attempt to uncover

the formal patterns tying the material to experience.

For the most part, students entering the Cluster do not think systematically. They do not use language as an instrument and more, they do not understand the relationship between thinking, using language, and understanding the world either "outside" or "inside" themselves. Students come in using words and ideas in an essentially passive, reactive way. Their sense of self is therefore arbitrarily and pejoratively "subjective," as opposed to an active, integrally subjective sense of self (based on the actual integrity of the individual.) Students in the Cluster face the difference between these two kinds of subjectivity and also begin to recognize the need to transcend the former. Our purpose is to help them work through the initial stages of this process.

Teaching how to question provides the basis for this. The significance of this cannot be stressed enough. Unless students learn how to question, and to question systematically, they will remain in their passive, pejoratively "subjective" state, since this state is, at this point, their only defense against the chaos around and inside them. But this defense establishes a dangerously isolating false "order" which actually prevents light from being shed on the chaos that must somehow be ordered.

This "order" is false in that it is taken on without reflection; it is, for example, simply accepting the idea that the earth is flat or that God is good because a parent, a teacher or some other authority says so. Since the order does not grow out of direct perception and/or

critical analysis of perception, it acts more or less like a cloak or shield that protects the individual from having to explore the world on his own.

The false "order" always expresses a whole range of beliefs, each one taken from an authority figure who, in some way, provides a sense of security. Since these beliefs come from various sources (i.e., parents, T.V., school authorities, peer groups), they have no organic relation either to the individual or to one another. The total effect, then, is incoherence and isolation. When a number of these individuals meet, the effect is another kind of chaos where instead of real communication, sharing of genuine beliefs and feelings, there is a kind of "babble," or, at best, the arbitrary matching of similar beliefs.

Given the distorting nature of belief in the perceptions of the students, both courses immediately address its function. In Philosophy, the first step is pointing out the distinction between "having a philosophy" and "doing philosophy." Most students think philosophy is simply having beliefs; this is explicit in a phrase like, "What's your philosophy of life?" Opposed to this is an understanding of philosophy as a process of becoming aware of and evaluating beliefs by questioning. In the English sections the work both prepares for and later mirrors this process by stripping away at the surfaces of words, pointing out their original roots and applications and asking students to question how later acquired meanings are derived. For example, after indicating that "liberal" derives from a Latin root meaning "the child

of a free man," students are asked why they study "liberal arts" today. In other words, they become active in regard to language, to how words are used, thus echoing the difference between "having a philosophy" and "doing philosophy."

The attention to language then focuses on various aspects of definitions. Students mistakenly believe that definitions are the first and last words revealing fixed realities. In order to correct this misapprehension, definitions are shown to provide only the wedge, the tool necessary to uncover reality.

In Philosophy, three central questions present themselves: 1) under what circumstances do we need definitions; 2) what kinds of definitions are available; and 3) what can definitions accomplish? In considering various types of definitions - stipulative, lexical, precising, persuasive, and essence - three crucial surface features of language emerge: ambiguity, vagueness and emotive meaning. Without awareness of these it is impossible to use language effectively and, so, experience cannot be ordered.

Of the surface features, emotive meaning is the most important and most difficult. Once students begin to understand it, however, they begin to become sensitive to the power of words, that is, the ability words have to persuade, wholly without the use of reason. Obviously, beyond what they perceive about language, students begin to get in touch with their own feelings and with how they have been persuaded. The stress on emotive meaning is valuable also because in analyzing it students see how words that are ambiguous and vague can

be defined in terms of other words which evoke positive or negative feelings, thereby influencing attitudes and, ultimately, action. For example, "abortion" can be defined as the murder of defenseless human beings or as the exercise of the legitimate rights of women. If students see these as acceptable definitions, their attitudes about abortion will follow automatically without their having reflected for themselves on the issue. This insight is developed further as other means of persuasion (i.e., advertising, religion, politics) are discussed and analyzed in class.

In the English classes work on definition is reinforced both by class discussions and assignments. After learning that the etymology of "definition" itself derives from a combination of roots meaning "to put a fence around," "an end or finish to one's property," students in The Research Paper complete an assignment where they find the etymologies of and define each of the original seven liberal arts, and determine under what names they study these "arts" today. After students have done this assignment and so have familiarized themselves with the information they have found both in the dictionary and encyclopedia, the following class sessions provide additional pertinent historical background, and so a context in which changes in meaning can be understood.

In Composition students list words having roots with which they are becoming familiar. For example, from the "fini" of "definition" they supply "infinite," "finish," "fine," etc; from the "mus" of "music," "amuse," "museum," "muse," and so on; while from the "geo"

of "geometry," they list "geography," "geology," "geocentric," etc. This exercise at the same time stretches their use of language and increases their ability to define, while implicitly laying the groundwork for an understanding of classes and concepts which they will especially need as their work in Philosophy progresses. The two related writing assignments during this period reiterate this. Students must write two "definition" essays: "What is Philosophy?" and "What Philosophy Means to Me." One demands the presentation and exploration of a lexical and historical definition--an "objective" approach--, while the other is "subjective" and asks students to provide and develop their own "stipulative" definition, illustrated by personal examples. Selected papers are later read in class and how effectively students deal with these problems of definition again raises the issues of "ambiguity," "vagueness," and "emotive meaning," but now in practical terms.

After beginning to examine classifications and concepts simply as shared roots in various words, students can also begin to understand that these are abstract ideas having no actual existence in the world. As a result, the temptation to read the requirements of concepts into the world is eased. In this way, students can approach more openly the question of human nature as it is being addressed in Philosophy, that is, not assuming that because there is the expression "human nature," there must be a fixed reality corresponding to it. If they do assume that there is this fixed human nature, they will rule out from the start the possibility of an alternative human nature. That is, at the

level of essence, change, growth, and development will not be able to occur. It may, in fact, be the case that in some ways human nature is unchangeable, but this is a substantive issue, not to be decided by a set of assumptions concerning how words mean and how definitions work. The question of what human nature is--and whether or not freedom is possible--is open, and now different theories concerning human nature and its development can be explored.

This part of the Philosophy course is structured by a general question: "How do human beings become who they are?" In a preliminary and inadequate fashion, this question is answered in terms of the classic distinction between heredity and environment. The central point here is that the explanation chosen determines one's attitude towards the possibility of social change. If, as a reading by Hobbes suggests, heredity is seen as the major determinant of human nature, social action will have a limited value. Again, exercising skills they have just used in doing the "liberal arts" assignment, students in the Research Paper apply the same techniques to learn about Hobbes' personal, historical and cultural background so that they can understand why, in his time, heredity was easily accepted as the major determinant of human nature.

Alternately, however, when the environment is considered the chief determinant, social action can be regarded quite differently, since changing the environment will change human nature. But the possibility of changing human nature by changing the environment demands looking more closely at the human situation. If change is attempted without carefully analyzing the existing problem, the situ-

ation can be made worse. In reading an essay by Arthur Koestler, students consider such aspects of human behavior as violence, dependence, and the split between reason and emotion. This continues the introspective turn which was begun with having students focus on their uses of language, but now the focus is also on non-linguistic behavior.

At the same time, the attention to language is maintained as students in English examine Koestler's rhetorical strategies. While his bringing to light certain aspects of human behavior is useful for students to reflect on, his use of language and structure suggests a solution which - though seeming more sophisticated - is no different from Hobbes' contention that we are the way we are by nature. What is interesting in this is the discrepancy between certain "facts" and the way that these facts can be used to buttress an implicit belief. This "split" can be discovered only by careful examination of a writer's metaphors, images, and examples. What students begin to realize is that a rhetorical form can persuade an audience just as a T.V. commercial can. So that unless each part of the form is considered for its consistency with other parts, that is, looking for contradictions, logical fallacies, ambiguities and vagueness, the argument cannot be accepted as valid.

The claim that human nature is fixed can serve in a number of ways to cut off relevant exploration. This is brought out very well in an article by John Dewey, the next reading assignment. Dewey recognizes the difficulty involved in changing human behavior; however, he suggests that this difficulty stems not from fixed behavioral ins-

tincts, but from the channeling of natural energy into fixed patterns of behavior or "habits." Understanding this process as the origin of rigidity enables students both to acknowledge the inertia of human behavior and to see that the inertia is not inevitable. Habits formed through experience can be altered in experience. From here the move to a discussion of freedom is implicit.

As indicated earlier, students begin the term essentially passive. This passivity is challenged first by forcing them to examine how language functions and how they use it. The next step is taken when, in analyzing the rhetoric of the Koestler essay, they begin to question not only the effect of individual words and phrases as they occur in various random contexts (i.e., news reporting, media advertising, religious sermonizing), but also the effect of words and phrases when controlled by the form of an entire structure. Consequently, they perceive the difference between form and content in learning to isolate for consideration particular substantive claims or concepts, while not necessarily accepting the thrust of a whole argument. Reading and discussing the Dewey essay reinforces this realization by presenting some of the same concepts as the Koestler essay, but now organized from an entirely different point of view.

The Dewey essay is a significant moment in the development of the students' skills of questioning and critically reflecting on concepts and experience. On a metalevel, at least two things happen at this point. 1) Students move from simply drawing parallels between their direct experience and a concept(s) to being able to compare and contrast different conceptual points of view. (Their assignment in English

now is to compare and contrast the points of view of Hobbes or Koestler and Dewey). 2) Through Dewey's abstract description students can recognize a process they have been and are engaged in: that is, they can now look at and reflect on their own rigidity and habitual behavior, their passivity, and so can consider the possibility of breaking out of it. In this way, the process becomes real as students realize the movement they have made. In other words, the Dewey essay serves as a mirror in which they see their own development.

The above steps are, understandably, moves toward both understanding the concept and participating in the reality of freedom. Now the third answer to the question of how human beings become who they are (the first two having been heredity and environment) can be proposed. The answer, choice, opens up the explicit discussion of freedom.

Most students separate the idea of freedom from that of responsibility. In reading an essay by Jean Paul Sartre, students are confronted with the opposite view, that freedom and responsibility mutually entail each other. In order to be able to say this, Sartre rejects all claims which insist that human nature is fixed. Students can sympathize with this view since they have already been somewhat prepared for it by reading Dewey. They also can begin to accept Sartre's underlying point, that as long as it is thought that there is a pre-existing human nature, what it is to be human is misunderstood. Man's essence does not precede his existence, but is created individually and collectively by actions through time. This perception is doubly significant. Firstly, it links up with what was done

earlier in the term on definitions, particularly essence definitions and what they can or cannot do. Referring back this way enables students to see how the linguistic analysis that was done has a pay-off in understanding experience. Secondly, it raises questions about what most students take for granted, namely, that an all-powerful God created them and all human beings with fixed natures. Believing this can relieve them from having to take responsibility for their lives. It allows them to see themselves as being taken care of and directed by an unseen but ever-present force. This is passivity at a more profound level, and is apparent in students' images of freedom as a restrictionless state in which all needs are magically tended to without any effort on their part. For Sartre, however, we live "authentically," i.e., accept our freedom, only when we give up this passivity and become "engaged."

To illustrate the points Sartre is making, Camus' The Stranger is assigned in Composition. Through the fictional representation of a "real" life, students are able to begin to reflect on the consequences of passivity. When students realize that Meursault commits the murder precisely because he does not feel, because he does not reflect on his actions, because all he has been is the passive receptacle of everyone else's expectations and ideas of him, they start to take their own apathy more seriously. In a carefully guided analysis of the text, each metaphor is isolated for consideration, since it is only through this kind of usage that feeling can be communicated in language. In Part I there are only three or four instances of this, in sharp contrast to the lyrical descriptions of Part II where, after

he has faced the prospect of dying, Meursault finally becomes "free" and so opens himself to the world around him--even though that world is "indifferent." Students obviously don't want to face the possibility of their own deaths, so at this point become curious to find out other ways of becoming free.

Using this curiosity as a wedge it becomes easier to move students to use language actively to discover themselves and aspects of reality. They are now ready to see that falling into clichés, saying, "It's cool" of an experience rather than finding out what the experience really is "like" for them, means that they have been using words passively rather than searching their own past and felt reality in order to find the appropriate term to complete their comparison. The writing assignment that follows reinforces this perception. Students are asked to describe a memory of feeling either anguish, despair or abandonment, the three elements Sartre notes as indications of being on the way to freedom. They are directed to use no clichés, only original metaphors, in describing their feelings. After completing this essay, at home, they all comment on how difficult it was, on how long it took them to be able to find the appropriate way to communicate their individual perceptions of the concept they chose as their subject.

This exercise is particularly useful because in becoming aware of how much energy and time are necessary to uncover their own "passive resistance" to expressing real feelings, students begin to understand that becoming free is something that demands full attention and honesty.

On a practical level, the Sartre essay, the connected Camus novel, and the discussions and assignments related to them shift the focus of the course from human nature to freedom. This is reflected as well in the students' actual experience of the process of becoming free. To explain: becoming free demands first critically examining one's personal, historical and social context in order to be able to separate authentic feelings and perceptions from those "determined" by an aspect of environment. Then, the individual becomes engaged in the present by projecting his ideal image of himself in a particular situation before acting. This act will be as free as he has been honest in giving attention to the impulses motivating him.

Implementing this sequence of development, students in the Cluster have been guided to critically reflect on aspects of their social, historical and personal contexts (just as earlier they reflected on these aspects in relation to Hobbes). They have, then, been participating in the first stages of the process, without really having looked at what they have been doing. At this moment, however, when suddenly the possibility is raised that there is no fixed human nature, and they become aware that they themselves have to make their own individual natures, they also become aware that they have been engaged in critically reflecting on their pasts and that they can use the same tool of abstraction to project an idea of themselves into a future, and so become responsible for their own making.

In other words, at the same time, they look at the concept of freedom, as their idea of what possibilities are open to them in their

projected futures--a limited view at this point, but useful in being tied to their experience--, and they realize, as well, that they are becoming free as they are involved in the process. This is their first simultaneous perception of two aspects of the same thing--the abstract/conceptual and the concrete/personal. This split in their awareness permits the full and active analysis of the concept of freedom which follows, an analysis structured by two questions which reinforce the distinction between abstract and concrete. They are: "What is a free act?" or "What is freedom?" and "Do I (the student) perform free acts?" or "Am I free?"

In the context of these two questions, a preliminary definition of freedom emerges; that is, freedom is the ability to do otherwise. This focuses attention, for a time, exclusively on the conceptual question of what freedom means. In the ensuing analysis an important feature of the concept raises itself, namely, the relationship between past and present, present and future. At the same time, two different interpretations of freedom present themselves: one involving freedom as an idea of a certain kind of continuity between past and present, present and future; the other, seemingly suggesting a disjunction between past and present, present and future. This contrast is reflected in the alternative claims that freedom is incompatible either with constraint or with causation.

This last distinction moves the class to consider the concrete personal question. For if freedom is the absence of constraint, it becomes necessary to explore those constraints which function in an individual's life. In this context, examples of both physical/external

and psychological/internal constraints are discussed. The examples of physical constraints are fairly obvious instances of external impediments to action, i.e., torture, threatening use of force, accidents. The key point is that freedom is not simply having a choice. For while in the face of physical threats one can choose to respond in a variety of ways, there is no effective freedom. The individual is being forced to respond to an externally created situation.

At this point an interesting fork presents itself. External/physical constraints can be further explored, as they display themselves more subtly in social, political and economic institutions. Or, the individual can be considered in terms of his internal/psychological constraints. The latter is chosen because unless the individual understands his own motivations, his inner reality, he will not be able to understand or accept either the need for collective institutions or his place in determining the shape of those institutions. That is, he will experience himself as cut-off, separate from, and imposed upon by those institutions as foreign and incomprehensible external constraints.

Students now can consider psychological constraints, knowing that at a later stage the collective institutions need to be looked at more carefully. The seeming separation of the internal from the external at this point is no <u>real</u> separation, however, since it is only through objective consideration of internal reality that the self can be realized as one among and like others, and so as "part" of a larger whole. This kind of perception has been made possible by the students' increasing ability to abstract.

Besides pointing students to examine basic aspects of their inner lives, the examples of psychological constraints allow two important conceptual claims to be made. The first is that freedom is more than the absence of external constraints and the second is that freedom is more than just doing what one wants. A compulsive handwasher, for example, is not externally constrained and is doing what he wants; yet, clearly, he is not free. The point that acting on wants is not equivalent to being free is significant because it focuses attention on what is wanted and away from what in the external world may prevent one from getting what one wants.

The introspective turn is now complete and provides a way for students to analyze further what is involved in genuinely thinking for themselves and being aware of their feelings and wants. The implicit claim here is that often people do not think for themselves, feel their feelings, or know what they really want. In such a situation they simply reflect external expectations, thereby creating a series of false, or what Fromm calls, "pseudo-selves." Becoming aware of which thoughts, feelings and wants are not their own allows stripping away the masks of the "pseudo-selves" in order to come into closer contact with critical resources and energy that can be expressed in genuine thoughts, feelings and desires. It is in this process that the real self is created.

Reinforcing this work in Philosophy, students in the English classes continue to analyze Camus' Stranger. As the focus in Philosophy shifts to the broader conceptual level indicated above, the discussions about Meursault and his behavior bridge this wholly abstract

consideration of freedom and a personal experience of it. In reading and reacting to the text, students, at the same time, must weigh the character and his actions objectively, while they are identifying with him and so experiencing a subjective world. The central question about Meursault is, of course, why he shot the Arab. This is simply a particular form of the abstract conceptual question of "What is a free act?" coupled with the concrete/personal question of, in this case, "Is Meursault free?"

Using the novel as a vehicle, students begin to see and feel the complexity of considering freedom in terms of an individual's life. The first response to the above question is always, "He shot the Arab in self-defense," since the Arab held a knife in his hand. This initial reaction illustrates how readily something external is seized on as an explanation for action. This, in turn, raises an aspect of the central contradiction inherent in the misapprehension of what freedom means. For, if freedom is a good, something to be sought, why are people always so eager to look for an external reason for behavior? This kind of insight is beneficial because students now begin to feel the strength of the resistance to looking at internal constraints.

Holes are shot through this first external reason of self-defense very simply by the students and by the fictional jury in the book, since Meursault shot five bullets into the body of the Arab when one would have been enough to stop the attack. Interestingly, after this, the explanations for the act are still external, though more subtly so; they indicate environmental factors impinging on Meursault. Stu-

dents attempt to account for his act by supposing him (a colonial Frenchman in Algeria) to be racist. This is still not sufficient to explain the five shots, however, especially in view of the fact that he expresses no hesitation or hostility in relation to the Arabs whom he had seen earlier. The next explanation is still external, that is, that he commits the murder as an affirmation of his friendship with Raymond. But this, too, proves inadequate since he took the gun apathetically and had been apathetic in his relationship to Raymond. However, that he does find himself in this relationship of "friendship" while not feeling, raises the important issue of the "pseudo-self," since in his relationship to Raymond, to his employer, to Maria, he fulfills expected roles but does so apathetically, because he has not critically reflected and chosen.

This process of trying to discover why Meursault shot the Arab five times, and why he did not cry at this mother's funeral, mirrors what is being done in Philosophy and implicitly justifies the turn away from considering even the subtle external forces to considering the inner constraints of the individual. For it is only when Meursault's inner being is understood that his relationship to all aspects of his environment--including people--can be understood. The way Meursault's psychological/personal constraints are discovered is by careful attention to his "habits" (recalling Dewey) and to his conformity/non-conformity with the "habits" of the community. Analyzing these illustrates how unaware Meursault is of how conditioned he has been by others' expectations. More strikingly, it

illustrates that being determined by others is the basis of apathy. In this instance, the apathy culminates in an extreme act of violence, the only way Meursault has to regain access to genuine feeling. The value of stripping away the roles of the "pseudo-selves" is thus understood and practiced "on a dummy" as students, in their identification with this anti-hero, continue to try to discover his real self.

A crucial move is now made in the Philosophy section. An attempt is made to bring together the abstract/conceptual and the concrete/personal question so that a limited response to the letter can be given within the structure provided by the former. Freedom is defined, at one level, then, as the absence of both external and internal constraints. This definition, however, reveals only one dimension of freedom, namely, "freedom from..." For, in the absence of constraint, action is still necessary. This realization focuses attention on the other dimension of freedom, namely, "freedom to...," or, what one does or does not do in a particular situation.

From this perspective, students can begin to ask themselves quite seriously whether or not and to what extent they are free. If freedom, conceptually, is the absence of constraint, then concretely and personally each student can determine his degree of freedom by examining the degree of constraint operating in a given context. This is an important move, but still lacking in specific detail. For the question of what is or is not a constraint in a particular situation now vividly emerges. This demands a fuller analysis and understanding of constraint, and, at the same time, involves an understanding of the notion of

rationality. For, as constraints are understood and so diminish, the possibility of non-constrained, that is, rational action presents itself. In this way, students perceive that freedom is something that can be attained or lost. They also see that it demands a lucid understanding of the "external" situation, and of their "internal" reality since it is only by weighing one against the other that they can get from the world what they want and need.

The result of these insights is that the problem of freedom is now looked at more deeply and involves more difficult questions about the nature of constraint and rationality. Characteristically, when students are requested to apply the concepts of "freedom from..." and "freedom to...," to their concrete experience, they still persist in treating virtually any request or demand from the external world as a constraint. They still resist seeing how their own attitudes and reactions to these outside requirements are often constraining. Thus, the rules and regulations of parents, adult responsibilities, scholastic requirements, traffic laws, etc., are all seen as constraints. This reaction reveals again how deep-seated is the desire to see freedom as a state of limitless floating in which all needs are magically fulfilled.

In this context, both the definition of freedom as the ability to do otherwise and the alternative claims that freedom is incompatible either with causation or constraint are reconsidered. One interpretation of the claim that causation is incompatible with freedom seems to suggest that a free act has no coherent relationship to the past.

This interpretation, which seems to coincide with students' non-conscious assumptions about what freedom is, will not do, for all action necessarily occurs in an ongoing time frame linking past to present and present to future. Students realize, then, that freedom has to do rather with the nature of the relationship between past and present, present and future, that is, with sorting out the factors impinging on possible action so that what is constraining is separated from what is not.

Again reflecting and concretizing the steps taken in Philosophy, during the last weeks of the term, students in the English sections actively engage in the process of understanding freedom by becoming even more directly involved with the case of Meursault. After an intensive lesson and homework exercise on logical fallacies, students begin to prepare a case either for or against Meursault, arguing either that the shooting was not a free act or that it was. Half the class acts as the prosecution, while the other half acts as the defense. Each student must individually prepare a brief. Then, after class discussions and group work, the best cases for and against Meursault are jointly decided on in preparation for a mock trial. This trial is modified so that it is presented more or less like a debate with point by point statements and rebuttals; the rebuttals must contain accurate descriptions of the logical fault which impedes the strength of the particular argument.

At the same time that this extended exercise obviously hones the skills needed to write the final argument essay, it also practically involves students in making finer and finer distinctions about what constraints are and which constraints were/are operating in

particular situations, and how these constraints affect the process of action. Looking at the case of Meursault--more or less objectively--and looking at their own subjective responses to his behavior and situation, they experience their own rationality as a discriminating function which cannot be separated from an understanding of the connection between past and present, present and future. This also represents a deepening of their direct experience of temporal connections, since now, towards the close of the term, what emerges is the value of what was done early on - e.g., the etymology exercises. The root of "ratio" in "rationality," of separating, discriminating, now takes on its full measure. In the same way, the understanding of the importance of words and even the awful categories of grammar that had to be painfully memorized, now becomes more than an intellectual apprehension, since by this time, students have clearly realized that discrimination and categorization cannot occur without the knowledge of the names and classes of things and feelings experienced. They also perceive that a responsible act is a sequence of steps. It is a process of critically reflecting, questioning themselves as to how to make a certain distinction, and seeing to what extent their own internal categories have been determined by past beliefs before acting. In this process of being "rational" animals they are participating in and, in fact, creating their place in time. Perceiving and engaging in this process also enables students to understand and accept the necessity of rules, of the discipline of external demands, since it is by learning some of these methods them-

selves during the term that they now begin to see the differences between the habitual responses of expected roles and their own genuine wants and feelings.

In addition, their sense of themselves as beings operating in time contributes a necessary element to the work they have continued to do in the Research Paper classes. The term paper assignment is to choose either a figure whose work they have read during the term or a figure with whom they are familiar whose work is related to the Cluster, and to determine the relationship between the work read and some aspect of the experience of the writer. This exploration parallels both the way they have looked at and come to understand Meursault and the way they are beginning to see themselves.

This way of looking takes into account, as we have shown, both the interrelationships of past and present, present and future, and, in this, the connection of an objective and a subjective sense of self. Looking in this way makes it clear that in order to resolve the tensions between these "opposites," the individual must realize himself as a <u>process</u> of becoming: this process is, in itself, freedom. In this the individual sees himself both as a concrete instance and a generator of the abstract concept. Finally, then, the fundamental identity between specific and general, concrete and abstract emerges.

The possibility this opens up is for a decrease of alienation and isolation as abstractions are understood to be simply the means of describing individual experience in common, collective terms. What is offered is a method, a process, an activity that obviously belongs not only to our classrooms, but can be used in every aspect of life,

as well as be applied to any body of material studied in the future.

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University of California
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